

CHAPTER TEN - COUNTY GOVERNMENT (Pocahontas County)

QUESTIONS

A. In what political division of Virginia did your county lie at the time of settlement? What were its boundaries? Where was the county seat located? What distance did our early settlers have to travel to the county seat? How often and for what purposes did they make this journey? How dependent were they upon their county government? How did they secure a marriage license, record a will, or a deed, pay their taxes, etc? What officers were charged with the enforcement of the law, and what were their experiences and hardships in the performance of their duty?

B. What were the powers and duties of the county court? List the various questions they might pass on in an ordinary session. Review any decisions which affected the section of the county that we are interested in. Name the justices of the court, and how often did they meet? What officers did they appoint to assist in the administration of county government? Of what judicial district and what circuit was this county a part? How often did the circuit court meet, and what was its jurisdiction? Who appointed the circuit judge? What were the most frequent infringements of the law? Highlight some controversial or significant cases in the court's history. Did the people rely upon the courts for settlement of disputes? What was the popular attitude toward the courts? Did the small farmer feel it was a "rich man's court"?

C. How many delegates were sent to the General Assembly from this political division? Who was eligible to vote? How many votes were cast? Where were the polling places? What political parties and issues divided sentiment? Did the laws passed by the Assembly show much concern for the trans-montane counties? List the county's representation in the Assembly to the time of the formation of the new county. What local bodies had legislative power? What was the scope of this power?

D. What was the relationship between the Virginia Board of Public Works and the county government? Did the people of the county feel they received an equitable share of public improvements, turnpikes, bridges, ferries, schools, etc., for the taxes they paid? What public improvements were undertaken in the county and how did they affect the people in the section that later became a new county? What local boards, commissions, and individuals served the county in an executive capacity--coroners, sheriffs, deputies, overseers of roads, clerks, etc. What were their duties? How generally was the law administered?

E. On what basis were taxes assessed in the county? What agency decided the assessment? How often, and by whom were taxes collected? What special taxes were levied--school tax? road tax? Could any of these levies be worked out or were they paid in cash? How were the county's taxes disbursed? Was the county satisfied with the tax system?

F. When did the agitation for the formation of a new county begin, and what was the basis of the proposal? Was it a political move, or did it represent the feeling of the broad mass of people in the section? Was there friction between different sections of the county over expenditure of taxes? Was the county too

unwieldy to be efficiently administered? What support did the movement rally?

G. List some prominent men of the "mother" county who influenced state- or nation-wide movements. What was their character? Were there qualities peculiar to or produced by the frontier society? Has the county played an influential role in the affairs of the state? List occasions.

II

Trace the growth of the agitation for a new county. Who first offered leadership to the movement? How did the movement express itself, by petition? by mass meeting? Give the names of petitioners and their standing in the county. When was the bill for the formation of the new county introduced in the legislature, and what support did it gain? What were the arguments and promises attending the passage of the bill? Diagram the machinery of county government as provided in the Act authorizing the formation of the county. Give the personnel and reports of the commissions appointed to draw the boundaries and locate the county town. What local factors influenced the location of the county seat? How was the land for the public buildings secured? What provision was made for public buildings? Who built the courthouse? How much did it cost? What labor was used? What material? When and where did the first county court meet? Who were the justices? What business did they take up, what officers appointed? What was the first marriage license, the first will, deed, etc., recorded by the new county? To what judicial circuit did the new county belong? Who was the judge, and how often did he "ride the circuit"? In what election district was the new county? Who were the delegates elected to the Assembly? Where were the polling places? What other officers did the people elect? What parties and what issues were before the people? What were the qualifications for voting, and what percentage of the population voted? Make a list of the principal county officials to the time of the Civil War.

What was the prevailing sentiment in your county at the beginning of the secession agitation? How did it find expression? What was the economic and political basis for this sentiment? Did your county elect a delegate to the Secession Convention? How did he vote? How did the question of secession or anti-secession stir up the people? What issues were in the mind of the ordinary voter who voted yea or nay on the Secession Amendment? What was the final vote on Secession? What logical basis was there for the stand of the county? How was your county organized for the coming conflict?

What changes did county government undergo between 1861-66? How completely was the county machinery disrupted? Did the courts meet regularly during this period? Were the county records kept as before? What damage did the public buildings sustain? How did the county react to the agitation for a new state? What was the basis for this reaction? Who represented your county at the state convention, and what part did he play in the proceedings?

Diagram the new system of county government under the new state constitution. How did the judicial, legislative, and executive branches of the county government function? List the townships, their size, and the justices in each. Who were the first county officers under the new set-up, and how did they secure the vote of the people in your county on the Test Oath? What were the practical effects of the Test Oath Amendment on the people and the government of your county? What percentage of the voters were disenfranchised? Was a

carpet-bag government set up? What form did opposition against the Test Oath take? What part did your county play in the repeal of this law?

III A. What county offices and public bodies exist today? What men have held these offices? What are the histories of the offices? What terms are served? How are the officers elected? What are their functions? What events gave rise to the establishment of these offices? Give their history, and whatever in the way of sideline material which may be found of special or unique interest.

B. What special laws exist within the county which differ from similar laws in other counties? How did they differ? What led to their enactment? Obtain all available material regarding the human interest side of local legislation. Also any odd or particularly useful or progressive legislation.

C. Give us the figures on the county's budget; its annual expenditures; its bonded indebtedness ; if any; its tax structure; begin at its beginning and obtain these figures for all years available. Tell of any extraordinary expenditures through the years; how much and what for, and how was the money obtained? What special levies and assessments have there been?

D. What precincts and voting subdivisions are there in the county? What voting officials? What voting requirements, and have these requirements always been the same? Give the hours and dates and methods of voting. What political parties exist and have existed in the county? Give the figures on the popular vote as often as obtainable. What are the salient points of any elections notable in the county's political history?

E,F,G,H,I,J. Follow the outline. Direct questions on these points should not be necessary, but suggestions can be supplied upon request.

THE HISTORY OF POCAHONTAS COUNTY

CHAPTER VII

COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

(Chapter Outline)

This section would begin where section five left off, telling the story of occupational development from the time when increasing civilization brought the rise of towns and the shift from employment in the home to specialization by workmen employed in groups to turn out manufactured products. Treating the subject chronologically within its limitations, the chapter could be developed as follows:

1. **Manufacturing Industry.** In Pocahontas County, this is comparatively unimportant, but cannot be overlooked because it has some history and a possible future.
 - a. First, the small manufactories that developed from home handicrafts and pioneer skills. What they were, when established, and where, by whom; what products, how made, what market, what influence on the county economic schemes? How were they capitalized, and how well did they develop and meet the shifting economic phases such as depressions, inflations and recessions; what finally happened to them? If there are any still in operation they are rare in this day of centralization, and should be treated as such. This division should tell of only those industries that were more or less locally financed and promoted. (Always give names, places and dates.)
 - b. The centralization of manufacturing; introduction of corporate control; out-of-state or other capital from outside the confines of the county; the industries which grew from this change in economic scheme; their size; location, products, number and kind of employees; the history of their expansion; their influence on the county's economic life; their interrelation with the county's natural resources; the industrial leaders who rose with industry and their influences; physical description of the larger industries as to plants and equipment and materials produced; summary of possible future industrial development, taking into consideration the resources obtainable in the county.
 - c. The Individual Entrepreneur. The story of the commercial establishment; in a new county this would be fairly short because its rise would be recent. Here would be treated the larger and better-known hotels, restaurants, garages, department stores and the like which have grown from the efforts of good business men with a sound financial acumen and remain home-controlled. (The company stores, chain stores, and branches of great national organizations need not be dealt with at any great length; they merit mention, but only because their presence indicates the county is a good commercial field.)
2. **The Extractive Industries.**
 - a. Lumber. Probably first developed; when and where, and by whom; for what market; to what extent; when did the industry die; has it any possibility of